Comrie Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

School Road
Comrie
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Telephone: 01764 661 450

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 May 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003016092

About the service

Comrie Primary School Nursery is a day care for children provided by Perth and Kinross Council. The service is registered to provide care to 24 children aged three years to those not attending primary school.

The service operates from a purpose-built facility within Comrie Primary School. Accommodation consists of one large play space, cloakroom area, children's toileting facilities and a large garden area. The nursery is close to local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 April 2023 between 09:15 and 17:15. We returned to the service on 28 April 2023 between 09:00 and 12:15. We gave feedback to the senior management team on 2 May 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with ten people using the service and eight of their family members
- spoke with five staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing.

• Children had fun as they experienced interesting play experiences.

• Staff facilitated play well and interacted skilfully to support and extend children's imaginative and thinking skills.

• Children benefitted from very positive mealtime experiences.

• Effective self-evaluation and reflection on practice enabled the senior management team and staff to clearly identify what was working well and what could be improved.

• Children were cared for by staff who were happy to see them and passionate about providing high quality play and learning experiences.

• Opportunities for Language, literacy and numeracy could be improved in the nursery garden.

• Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported with free flow access to the nursery garden and school grounds which provided opportunities that promoted challenge and creativity.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children received warm, nurturing, and responsive support from staff that were very kind and caring. Staff had high aspirations for the children in their care as they sensitively and consistently listened to them. We found children were content and happy and it was evident they enjoyed being in the setting. Staff chatted to children as they played, provided praise, encouragement and reassurance when needed. Children's views and feelings really mattered as they received compassion in how they were supported by staff. The positive relationships that had been formed helped children to feel valued, safe, and secure.

Staff managed minor disputes between children very well. Children that needed assistance knew to say, 'I need help' to which staff respectfully responded. They used phrases such as, 'I hear what you are telling me', and 'I can tell this is making you sad'. This demonstrated a very calm and supportive approach which helped children regulate their emotions and enabled them to resolve minor conflicts. Staff skilfully empowered children to think about their choices and how this impacted on their peers. This resulted in children that were gaining confidence and skills in regulating their individual emotional security and wellbeing.

Children benefitted from personal plan information that was current, supported their needs and was easily accessible to staff. This meant children received the right care at a time that was right for them. Staff had built positive working relationships with other professionals to provide consistent support for children. Strategies were in place to ensure their needs were met in a respectful way and that they felt included in all nursery experiences with a true sense of belonging. Effective information sharing was supported through the meaningful relationships that had been formed with families. Parents told us they felt included in the nursery community and were confident their children's needs were being met. They had been invited into the nursery to support their children to settle in, to share their musical interests and breadmaking skills with the children. This holistic approach resulted in children that were learning, were happy and felt safe.

Children experienced very positive mealtime's and were fully involved in the planning and preparation of their meals. They helped staff prepare snack and carefully laid tables at lunchtime with tablecloths and centre pieces. They demonstrated a real sense of pride in the responsibility they had been given. Children were offered a wealth of opportunities for developing independence. They confidently poured their own drinks, were provided with opportunities for choice and responsibly rinsed their plates before putting them in the dishwasher. Staff sat and ate with children encouraging rich discussions on healthy eating and supported children to try new foods. This strengthened attachments, supported the development of self-help skills, and ensured children experienced a mealtime that was unhurried and sociable. Healthy choices were supported well, for example, a school initiative called 'Breaducation' taught children about food transformation and engaged children in daily bread baking. On the day of the inspection Primary school children brought a loaf of bread they had baked into the nursery for the children to enjoy. Children were provided with wholemeal bread from a local bakery at snack time, a child told us, 'This bread is very tasty you know'.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play as they played happily independently or cooperatively in small groups. Staff played with the children and supported learning through exciting and interesting play opportunities. For example, a small group of children were responsibly preparing vegetables to make leek and potato soup and another group were using real tools to create a large wooden flower for the garden area. A child told us, 'I used nails for this and look I've painted it to'. Staff effectively encouraged children to follow their current interests in planting and Spring which were evident in most areas of play and staff facilitated their play well through a good provision of loose parts and natural materials which promoted children's curiosity and imagination skills.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy was supported well within the indoor environment. Opportunities were provided for mark making in most areas of play, staff were spontaneously singing, and books sparked children's curiosity. Children invited us to join in and help them count the spots on a ladybird on a large digital screen within the playroom. We discussed with staff introducing smaller natural materials to help support children to sort and match. There was scope to further develop these key skills in the nursery garden. Language, literacy, and numeracy sheds were available for the children to access, however, we found these could resourced better with natural resources which would support children's curiosity in their natural surroundings further.

Staff provided children with a range of spontaneous and planned experiences that supported them to be engaged in their play in a meaningful way. Planning approaches were a good balance of child led and adult initiated learning which supported children to develop and flourish.

Floor books were child centred and demonstrated that children's views and opinions mattered as staff responded to their questions and enquiries with interesting play experiences. This told us children were supported well to lead their play and learning. We found, there was some missed opportunities to explore learning further. We suggested ways in which activities provided could be extended to deepen learning and help evidence children's progression and breadth of learning.

Observations of learning had improved since the last inspection. They were shared with families on a digital platform and were focused on children as individuals and recognised their successes. Next steps in learning were identified and displayed in a way that allowed children to access. We found some children's next steps were too vast to be developmentally achievable. For example, 'recognise colours' and 'plan my nursery day'. We suggested identified next steps include strategies on how staff will support children to achieve. This would result in children being appropriately challenged in their learning and progress with achievable next steps. The management team told us, they had identified this through their monitoring processes and would be included as part of the ongoing improvement work.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery was provided from a separate self-contained unit next to the school. The open plan playroom decorated in neutral colours was well furnished, calm, and inviting with lots of natural light. The welcoming cloakroom provided families with a wealth of information on children's interests and smiling staff created a happy atmosphere which meant children arrived and settled quickly into their nursery routines. Staff were

pleased to see the children and available to help support those who found it more challenging to separate from their families. They were provided with cuddles and comfort which enabled them to join in the nursery experiences quickly and reassured families their children felt safe and secure.

The well organised indoor environment had been laid out to provide interesting and comfortable spaces for children to play and learn. Homely play spaces gave children a strong sense of safety where they could enjoy reading stories with staff. A wicker pod provided children with a cosy area to have some alone time, rest or regulate their emotions if needed.

Staff implemented infection, prevention, and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. The playroom was very clean and ventilated well throughout the day. Children were confident in washing their hands after playing outside and before mealtimes. These established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported with free flow access to outdoor area with lots of opportunities for planting, using real tools and being creative which was a real strength of the service. The garden area was an interesting layout with different surfaces and offered different areas to explore and be creative. Children enjoyed making a den and were busy in the mud kitchen. One child told us, 'I'm making a chocolate cake'. There was a good provision of larger loose parts and we found children worked cooperatively together to create an obstacle course. Children had access to the school playing field, playground and large climbing structure which developed their dynamic play and gross motor skills further.

Children benefitted from staff who skilfully used questioning to enable them to take positive risks in their play experiences. There was a strong focus on safety and children confidently showed us how they kept themselves safe when pedalling on bikes in the school playground. Children undertook 'safety officer' roles and a folder documented how children risk assessed their areas of play both indoors and outdoors. These approaches contributed to children learning about how they keep themselves and others safe.

Achievements and children's work throughout the nursery were displayed in a respectful way which gave children a sense of ownership and provided them with a sense of belonging.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children and their families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. Effective policies, procedures, self-evaluation, and quality assurance processes were in place to support the development and improvement of the service. Visible leaders with high aspirations for children, staff and the overall service had successfully created a shared responsibility to improving outcomes. Their commitment to service development promoted a shared vision and supported positive outcomes for children and their families.

The vision, values and aims of the service had been developed through consultation with staff, children, and families. The service valued the opinions of children and their families which ensured their values, vision and aims represented their community. This contributed to the positive ethos of the setting.

Leaders had established strong working relationships, enabling mutual trust and respect between the staff

team. They worked very well together to promote an inclusive environment which promoted a very happy, secure, and supportive environment for children and their families. The senior management team supported staff in a way that empowered them to share their views and to have responsibility for areas of improvement within the service. They encouraged staff to undertake leadership responsibilities to embed learning from training. For example, they had a strong focus on children's emotions, outdoor learning and incorporating the principles of the United Nations Convention on The rights Of The Child into practice. This approach was building on staff confidence and effectively supporting them in their roles. Staff reflected well together to bring about positive change, they were knowledgeable that high quality learning through play needs to be at the heart of the service they provided.

A realistic improvement plan with outcome focused priorities was driving forward nursery developments. Parents were kept up to date on progress through a visual display of how targets were being met displayed in the nursery cloakroom. They could access QR codes which provided meaningful information on how children, families and staff had been included in developing and improving the service. Opportunities were available for families to ask questions and they were provided with informative feedback with a 'you said, and we did' display. A regular review and evaluation of the improvement plan was undertaken as part of the weekly staff meetings. These approaches ensured that everyone within the service was involved with ongoing improvement work which contributed to the sense of shared purpose and vision.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were very confident within their roles, and we found staff morale was high. They felt supported and valued by each other and the senior management team. Staff told us, they felt fortunate to work in the nursery within such a beautiful school. The small team had formed positive working relationships, they were supportive and respectful of each other's strengths. As a result, they had created an environment that was safe and secure for children and their families.

Staff positively interacted with the children and were very supportive, kind and nurturing in their approach. They clearly enjoyed being with the children and ensured that the activities and play experiences challenged and interested the children. Staff had a very good understanding of current guidance and how they used this to enhance children's experiences.

Staff communicated very well throughout the day to ensure children's routines were not disrupted with daily tasks or unplanned events. For example, in the afternoon of the inspection, as the children were preparing for a walk round the school grounds, the nursery staff called on a school member of staff to assist with first aid. They worked effectively together to ensure continuity of children's care was consistent. We found there was a good mix of skills and knowledge, and staff were motivated and committed to providing positive outcomes for children. The positive team ethos was very evident.

The deployment and levels of staff within the service were appropriate to ensure effective care and support for all children throughout the day. The small staff team were deployed in a way that promoted positive experiences for children as they were able to respond to children with care and attention. As a result, children benefitted from close attachments with all staff members. This was enhanced through positive working relationships with children's families.

Parents were kept informed of who was caring for their children through verbal and written updates and a staff photo board in the nursery cloakroom ensured families were familiar with staff. Staff absences were very well managed as staff that knew the children and their routines were available to cover for any unplanned absences.

Families held the staff team in high regard and described them as nurturing, welcoming and supportive. One parent told us, 'The staff team go above and beyond to ensure the children are happy'. Another parent told us, 'I feel the staff here have a good understanding of every child, we'd be completely lost without them'.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure that people get the medical treatment they need, the provider must put in place an effective and timely system to review and update medical protocols.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective." (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 8 May 2018.

Action taken since then
Medication was well managed and reviewed regularly through consultation with families, this process included a review of medical protocols.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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